



IDOC

Staff Wellness

A Quarterly Insight Into Correctional Wellness

TWO AREAS OF WELLNESS

By: Amy Beck

Happy New Year! I don't know about you, but I am thrilled 2020 is over! It seemed each day some new chaotic event would happen demanding my emotional involvement. I got to the point of, "Well let's see what's happening today!" Cheers to the new year!

I digress. Let's get into it and start by exploring a "New Dimension." Not only for IDOC life but our lives outside of IDOC; our family. As introduced in the last edition, you learned that there are 8 dimensions to wellness. We will just talk briefly about two dimensions in this edition.

The first dimension I want to talk about is Physical. It's January and we want to get started on our summer bods. Unfortunately, in IDOC, we are likely not the same size we were when we first hired in. Now for some, that is a very good thing. It means you decided to take control of your life and decided to eat healthy and work out. For others, like me who let corrections take control of our lives and we are unhealthier than when we hired in. Many things come into play with this but a huge factor is stagnation. We sit. We sit all day long. Some have a post where they walk from place to place and escort lines but that is a small percentage.

Not only do we sit stagnant, but we often do not eat healthy. If we sit all day and are bored, what's one thing you may constantly do? Eat.

Here are a few suggestions to help boost a healthy lifestyle. Walk for 20 min. a day, 5 days a week to get started. Once you feel comfortable with walking you can move to jogging or even add 1 minute of walking, 1 minute of Sprints (as fast as you can go) and slow back down to walking for 20-minute do this in intervals. Intermediate fasting is another idea. I recently started this myself. Takes some time to get used to but once you do, it's like riding a bike. If allowed bring a healthy lunch to work and eat only what you bring. Ensure you have healthy snacks nuts, veggies, seeds etc. Also drink at least 60 ounces of water a day. Actually, half your body weight in ounces is better. Making these little adjustments can make a big difference in your overall health. Once you get used to this routine change it up! Go to the gym, do squats every hour at your desk walk at lunch. Did you know can check your calories on a free app that not only works on your phone but also your computer? It's called Myfitnesspal.com. This is only one app there are others. If you find one that works

for you share it. It could help someone the same as it helped you.

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Dimension – 2 the financial dimension. How can we change our financial situation? I used to pretty much live paycheck to paycheck when our raises were frozen it was rough. I was new and had received only one raise at that point. I had to figure something out to make it work. I found the best way to start was to budget. There are many budgeting software programs for your computer, but I went the cheap way and started a plain excel program. This program shows my checks twice a month as well as my bills that I pay each month and subtracts them from my check. This helps me see where my money is going. It also shows me where I need to stop spending money. If there was extra money at the end, I did not get spend it, I saved it. I even went as far as opening a savings account at a different bank so it would be harder to roll it over to my checking. This provided an "I want that speedbump." I found there is a huge difference between want and need.

Think about saving \$1000.00 dollars in an emergency savings account. Then consider what bills you can dump. Next start finding ways to pay off debts. One way is pay the smallest debt off first. Once that debt is paid off take the amount you paid each month on the paid off debt and add it to the next smallest debt and so on. The more you can pay on the debt the faster you can pay it off. Your paycheck is often the best wealth building tool you have. Telling Mr. Ben Franklin where to go, what to do, and how to get there gives you power over your money! In the end you will be saving and paying yourself and not the banks.

Next *Cool off!* Before making a big purchase (100.00 or more) agree to walk away for at least two hours. Consider the purchase objectively. Is it a need or a want? Can I buy a used one or must it be new? Life can change so drastically and in an instant (thank you COVID-19) that we may not be able to protect against everything, but we can be better prepared.

realized when you try to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense,

These are just suggestions to help you get started on your best financial life. Visit the below websites for more research other ways you can help yourself and your family financially and physically for your future.
<https://www.moneyunder30.com/free-budget-spreadsheet>

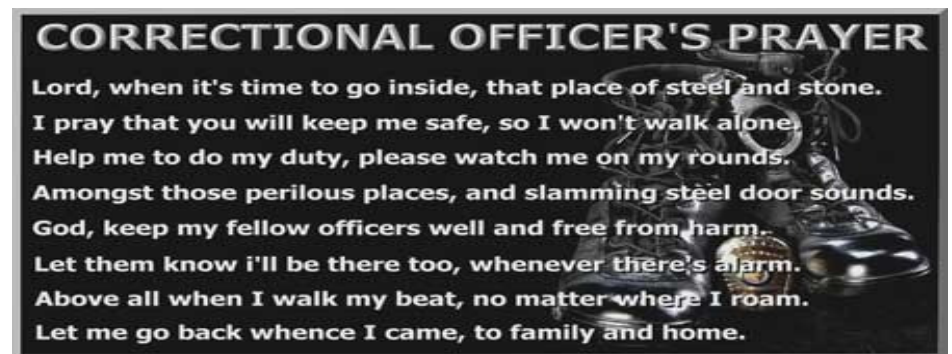
<https://www.moneyunder30.com/free-budget-spreadsheet>

Spiritual Wellness- Christopher Easton

All of us have been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for nearly one year. "Responding" is the right word. None of us were prepared for the challenge and experiences brought by this global health crisis. In the past year we have been trying to stay physically well; doing what we can to mitigate risks. Masks, check - gloves, check - non-sticky hand sanitizer, CHECK!

This year, those who are tuned to the frequency of spiritual things learned that a divine experience can truly be found anywhere and is not necessarily programmed by our gathering with people of faith in churches, temples, or mosques. We have witnessed that spiritual encounters show up even when we cancel our religious services, both inside and outside the fence.

As we consider what helps us measure our spiritual wellness during this time of disease, a place to start is intentionally creating space in our lives to listen for the still, small voice within each of us. When you are able to limit distractions and focus in a quiet space, what do you hear?



Maybe as we listen and discern what is needed, we find a deep, weary fatigue that could be addressed with rest. Or, we find an unrelenting thirst, requiring hydration or knowledge. If we do not slow down and spend time listening to our body, mind, and soul, we miss the opportunity to be rejuvenated, refreshed, and restored through rest, thirst-quenching, and joy.

Make space in your life to listen. Resist the noise and you will experience a sense of calm in the midst of this storm. In a world dimly lit, spiritual wellness is essential for a life well-lived.

By fighting against it and not giving in you find out the strength of the wind. This is

Staying Well

The book is available for all staff to borrow from their facility. It is a guide to identifying and protecting yourself against corrections fatigue as well as a glimpse into our world for families. See a SWRT member today to take home a copy.

Technology Meets Psychology

Though technology cannot replace real-world mental health support, the busy and gadget-centric world in which we work and live has given way to creative tools to help people manage and monitor their mental health. One of these tools is the mental health app.

"What's Up? - A Mental Health App" was developed using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) techniques to help the user monitor and manage his or her mental health right from a mobile device. The app, available free on Android and IOS devices, offers coping strategies and tools to help the user manage anger, stress, and depression, as well as keep track of personal habits and concerns.

In addition to helpful tools, the app also offers links to other resources for mental

health help, including but not limited to suicide hotlines.

The Good:

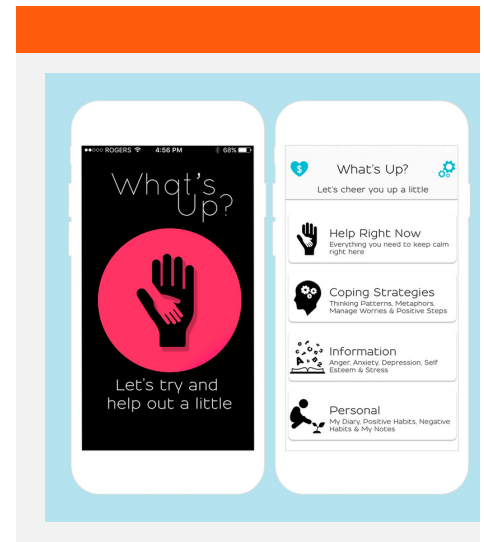
The tools offered by the app are well-organized and useful. Coping strategies include identifying thought patterns and worry management, while breathing exercises and additional resources are offered to those who need help immediately. There is also a section in the app that helps the user keep track of positive and negative habits, take notes, and journal.

The Bad:

It seems an oversight that hotline numbers and resources would be listed last on the list of ways to "get help now" on a mental health app, but these numbers and websites are listed at the bottom of the section. Some of the tools listed in the app are more advice and affirmations than they are interactive. The app could be more helpful in this way, but one might chalk that up to the limitations of technology.

"What's Up? - A Mental Health App" is, overall, a helpful tool that takes a friendly,

conversational tone to deliver information for someone wanting to be more aware about his or her mental health. While the app does not replace the help of a trained professional, it can offer tools and insights for managing and coping with mental health concerns in a busy world.



Exceptional Staff

By Laura Long

Love, Abby – Menard Correctional Center

On January 10, 2015, Abigail Liefer, daughter of retired Menard Correctional Lieutenant Daniel Liefer and Menard Correctional Supply Supervisor Terri Liefer, was killed in a drunk driving accident. The non-profit organization Love, Abby was founded in remembrance of Abigail's generous spirit and desire to help others.

Love, Abby is comprised of Dan and Terri Liefer, Menard Correctional Officer Dara Ernsting, and numerous other IDOC volunteers who come together to make sure that Abigail's memory and legacy continue. The organization provides disadvantaged children and families in the Menard community with essential items throughout the year & promotes the Random Act of Kindness Day in February.

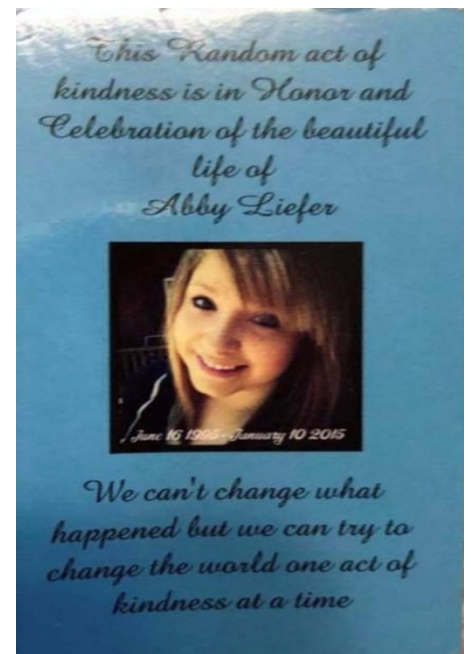
Through fundraising, donations, and countless volunteer hours, Love, Abby provides clothing, book bags, and hygiene items to kids of all ages. When contacted by DCFS or Lutheran Family Services, the organization will provide placement bags to

children in foster care. Love, Abby also annually awards a local deserving high school senior with a \$1000 scholarship. Although it was temporarily suspended in 2020 due to

CF2F: What is this?

From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment™
From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment™ (CF2F) is a course that uses evidence and data to explain the psychological dynamics behind the negativity of the corrections workplace and its costly consequences. CF2F analyzes the causes and signs of corrections fatigue and provides strategies for professional fulfillment and self-care.

For more info visit
www.desertwaters.com



COVID, the organization additionally sponsors the yearly Keeper of the Keys event and hosts Running for a Cause each month at The Phoenix, a Wellness Center in Red Bud.

Christmas 2020 was difficult for Love, Abby as fundraising efforts throughout the previous year were limited due to COVID-19. However, staff at Menard realized the struggle and came through for the children in their community. Without the staff's generosity and support, Love, Abby's Christmas Wishes would not have touched so many lives.

February 10, 2020 is recognized by the State of Illinois as Abby & Hannah's Random Act of Kindness Day. Over the years since this began, Random Acts of Kindness in the name of Abby Liefer has reached around the world. At Menard, it is common on this day for staff to leave notes of encouragement in various places throughout the facility and purchase refreshments in the employee commissary for others. In the community, it has been witnessed in recent years that people purchase meals for those behind them in a drive thru and coffee for others at the local coffee shop. All of this is done in the name of Love, Abby and has proven that you can influence positivity through random acts of kindness.

AFSCME Illinois **Personal** **Support Program**

The professional staff of the AFSCME Personal Support Program (PSP) is ready to help you or a member of your family with personal concerns or problems, whether they occur at home or at work. The PSP offers services statewide through a network of licensed professionals who are specially trained to provide confidential assistance on a wide variety of concerns and problems, including stress, marital/partner problems, parenting, grief, and elder care concerns. You can reach the PSP from 8:30 Am through 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, at 1-800-647-8776



Josh Horton - TRT member and Sheridan Correctional Center Lieutenant

On the morning of November 26, 2020, TRT member and Sheridan Correctional Center Lieutenant, Joshua Horton, was commuting from his home to the Stateville Correctional Center Range. During his commute, Josh saw a semi tractor-trailer that had been in a very recent accident, laying on its side and smashed into a guard rail. Josh pulled to the side of the road and sprang into action. The semi-trailer was a tanker carrying fuel, and Josh saw that a large amount of fuel was leaking onto the ground. He directed a bystander to call 911, grabbed a fire extinguisher and put out a few small fires that had already started from the impact. While putting out the fires, Josh could hear screaming coming from inside of the semi cab. Josh, and a couple of others who had stopped to help, disregarded their own safety and responded to the screaming. Josh and the others worked frantically, ignoring the risk of new fires starting and began trying to free the injured driver from the cab. The driver's legs were tightly wedged by the dash, making the extraction take a considerable amount of time. After over five minutes of physically ripping parts of the dash out of the cab, Josh and the others were able to pull the man to safety. The driver was transported to a local hospital where he was treated for his injuries. Due to Josh's quick thinking and selfless acts, this potentially disastrous situation was mitigated to only minor injuries.



Corrections Staff

Remember Seeking Wellness Is Not A Weakness



Miss Bliss

Miss Bliss

Dear IDOC staff: as a SWRT member, I have had many people talk to me about things they are having problems with. Each time there seems to be: How can I fix this? How can I change that? Why do I feel this way? Questions are a great way to communicate and get other people's advice or opinion on the matter. It is also a great way to start a conversation if you are not wanting to let down all of your barriers, but you still want someone to listen.

The one question that I hear so much is, how can I de-escalate myself or leave my "8 on the Gate" so I don't take my workday out on my family? Some of these ideas are taken right from others who learned to get over this problem. They may not all work for you but give them a try or even come up with a better way that may fit you and your commute home.

1.) Talk to a family member or friend on your trip home. Someone who you feel comfortable talking to and makes you laugh. 2.) If you live close to the facility, take a detour and drive around or go to a happy place. Maybe it's a wooded trail, a park, the lake, or somewhere that gives you great joy and just enjoy the view. Feel the wind blow, listen to the world around you, just focus and don't think of anything else but what is happening at that very moment. 3.) Listen to classical music or any uplifting music that will calm your mind down. 4.) Exercise. Join a gym or go for a run before you go home. This will not only help raise your spirits and put you in a good mood, but you can lose weight, tone up, and get your blood circulating. 5.) Explain to your family that you need 30 minutes to unwind before you can be daddy/mommy. Go take a nice bath or shower, read a book, knit, make something

out of wood, work on your hobby, etc. Find something that can take your anxiety down a few notches before you help with homework or adult. 6.) meet up with friends to play basketball, football, etc. 7.) Journal. Some people enjoy journaling. You write down your day whether it was a bad day or a good day. Once you write it down, you close the journal and forget about it. It helps get everything off your mind and you feel so much better once you do it.

These are just few suggestions that you can try. Hopefully one or more of them can work for you no matter how long of a drive you have and how bad of a day you had. It is hard to leave work at work and home at home, we all understand. All you can do is try your best so one does not spill over on the other.



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WELLNESS” >>>**



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Sandy Seibert & Toriano Jeffries, North

Greg Runyan & Rod Dial, Central

Chuck Mattmiller & Jon Brown, South

